

TOWN OF WEBSTER
Office of Selectmen
945 Battle Street/Rte. 127
Webster, NH 03303

Webster Board of Selectmen's Meeting – November 16, 2009

7:00 P.M. Present: Chairman Thomas Mullins and Selectman George Hashem.

The Board signed the payroll and check manifests.

Selectman Hashem made a motion to accept the regular Selectmen's minutes of 11/02/09 as written; seconded by Chairman Mullins and approved. Selectman Hashem made a motion to accept the non-public minutes of 11/02/09 as written; seconded by Chairman Mullins and approved. Selectman Hashem made a motion to accept the minutes of 11/09/09 as written; seconded by Chairman Mullins and approved. The Board will review Hopkinton's Meeting Minutes of 10/26/09 and 11/2/09 at the next meeting.

The Board signed the following for Mrs. Jones:

- A Supplemental Warrant 2009 PO 2 for Roger & Darlene Rislove Map 7-44;
- An abatement 2009 PO 2 for Daniel & Karen Moran Map 7-44;
- A Land Use Change Tax for Leslie Syvertsen, Trustee and Phyllis Roby, Rev. Trust Map 8-36;
- The Current Use Land Use Tax Collector's Warrant for Map 8-36;
- The Planning Board appointment sheet for John Nelson; and
- An appointment sheet for Rich LaValley as a part-time Police Officer.

Financial Administrator Wendy Pinkham spoke with Fred Regan, head of maintenance for the School District, who has made arrangements with Unitil for the District to take over the payment for the two school flashing lights. The office staff will still turn the lights on and off for the beginning and ending of the school year.

Lieutenant Phil Mitchell presented the Police Department semi-monthly report and a request for vacation leave in December.

Road Agent Emmett Bean is grading the roads after the recent heavy rains, has repaired a header on Corn Hill Road and is continuing with routine maintenance.

Selectman Hashem made a motion to withdraw \$2,185 from the previously established Town Hall Capital Reserve to be paid to Contoocook Artesian Well Company for an automatic backwashing sediment filter; seconded by Chairman Mullins and approved. Mrs. Jones will prepare a purchase order and advise the well company of the approval.

Resident Roy Fanjoy spoke about F.A.T. or Frustration, Anxiety and Tension and gave the definition for each. He gave his explanation of how he perceived questions to and response from the Board regarding the Police Department staffing, funding and future. He requested respect from the audience during Board meetings and requested that the Board recognize and acknowledge the audience if there are questions. He then asked that if there was a report from Mr. Gross tonight, had it been edited in any way.

Chairman Mullins welcomed Senator Harold Janeway, Representatives Christine Hamm, Derek Owen and Gary Richardson, all of whom had been invited by the Board to discuss expectations regarding the State Revenues and any affect they might have on towns. Senator Janeway and Representative Richardson went to the Legislative Budget Office for this information. A prepared handout was distributed regarding Webster's revenues for FY 2004-2009, without any future estimates, as well as explanations on the revenue sources. Representative Richardson felt the overall impact on Webster should be positive, but that included all school funding and touched upon the increase expected in the portion of the municipal funding to the NH Retirement. Senator Janeway noted that the focus tonight was on the town portion of the budget. He noted that Motor Vehicle fees are one of the largest revenues in Towns,

are the most unpredictable and are separate from tonight's prepared report. Due to an expected decrease in revenue, he recommended that the Town keep level or lower the estimated revenues from this source. He noted that Flood Control funds and Highway Block Grant are expected to remain the same, Meals and Rooms is frozen at the 2009 level for the next two years and Revenue Sharing will disappear. He noted that the NH Retirement System is a function of those employees in the system and will probably rise at a rate of about 25%. Representative Hamm said that in general terms the State needs to find more revenue. Senator Janeway explained that the State adopts a two-year budget with the expectation that currently the second year will show some recovery from any shortages, touching on stimulus funds and non-recurring expenses not expected to be on the next budget. Senator Janeway noted that the Governor has substantial ability to change things by going to a fiscal committee, a mini-legislature that can act on further cut-backs if needed, though he didn't foresee that action needed because of the current budget. Representative Hamm felt that in the short-term the State was ok, but not for the long-term unless changes are made. She stated that NH is the second most frugal State in the Nation. Senator Janeway had a copy of the 10-year roads plan for NH, but was not optimistic for its completion without further revenue adjustments. Chairman Mullins thanked all the representatives for attending tonight's meeting.

Resident Dave Batchelder spoke about Webster's state of affairs. He was disturbed about the recent negativity being reported in the local papers and on the local television station regarding Police coverage. He talked about how the Selectmen are governed by a Chart-of-Accounts and by a number of State Statutes dedicated to the running of the Town. He recommended that anyone interested in seeking the position of Selectmen become knowledgeable of these rules and regulations. He stressed the importance of knowledge and experience gained by serving on Boards like the Planning and Zoning Board prior to seeking a Selectmen's position. He stressed the experience of those currently serving. He felt that the Selectmen had been "dumped" on for weeks on end and had concerns regarding "rumors" related to those officials who recently resigned. He read a letter from Fire Chief Adam Pouliot who stressed that he had a good relationship with the Board, but was resigning because of commitments to his full-time employment, part-time employment and a new family commitment because of an upcoming marriage. However, he will remain active on the Department. He spoke with Tax Collector Madeleine Roberts who also advised that she had had a good relationship with the Board, noting it was time to retire and that she did have some health issues. He again expressed concerns regarding name calling of Board Members and dissemination of information to the local news sources. Selectman Hashem made a motion to allow Mr. Batchelder another five minutes to continue, seconded by Chairman Mullins and approved. He felt things had degraded to a point where some, including him were receiving threatening phone calls, which was not good for anyone. He felt that it was a small group "stirring the pot".

Officer-in-Charge Don Gross advised that he was unaware of the expectation of a written report at the last meeting, though it was noted in the minutes. In response to Mr. Fanjoy's earlier question, he advised that there was no editing of the report he was prepared to give tonight nor was there any Selectmen influence. He stated that the Selectmen gave him absolute reign to go forward with the Police Department based on his experience and that he would do the best he could for Webster. Copies of the report were distributed to the public. Mr. Fanjoy requested that the report be put on the website, which will be done. He explained the content of the report and how he has been interacting with the public and other agencies, advising that he was available anytime to the public through the numbers provided. He advised that the Department has brought back the part-time Secretary to allow the Lieutenant more time outside the office and welcomed the return of Part-Time Police Officer Rich LaValley to the force. The Department is moving forward and he is pleased with the cooperation of the Lieutenant and other outside agencies. Mr. Gross is confident with the progress made and in the future of the Department. Following are some of the questions posed to and answered by Mr. Gross:

- Detail work done by the Lieutenant;
- Budget projections for the future;
- Projections for future staffing of the Department;
- Comparison of Department size to those of similar size and how they compare;
- Needs versus wants and how to budget for same;
- Response time concerns from the public and potential mutual aid response;
- Concerns over response from mutual aid departments prior to response from the local department;

- How calls for help are prioritized and how help is typically dispatched;
- Whether people in general depend too much on police help today;
- The benefits of an officer being visible through community policing;
- What it would take to actually staff a 24/7 Police Department and the fact that there would still be response issues without additional back-up available;
- What size the department should be;
- Use of full-time officers versus part-time officers and associated training of each;
- Discussion on the current budget and future budget; and
- Whether qualified Police Officers would be willing to come to Webster with Mr. Gross expressing no concern regarding this.

Mr. Gross touched on some of his thoughts and ideas for the future staffing of the Department without any specifics. He expressed confidence that his proposal would work well for Webster and would probably be receptive to the public.

8:31 P.M. Selectmen Hashem made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Chairman Mullins and approved.

Thomas S. Mullins-Chairman
BOS/jj

George K. Hashem